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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Wow, has it been cold lately! It’s been an average of thirty degrees colder than normal around here for the past week! Add the wind-chill on top of that and it’s downright frigid! And, top of that, it was one hell of a week at work! Outside, you freeze; inside work, you fry! Nothing I hate worse on a job is politics. I realize that it exists, and is normal at the upper levels of administrative offices. But the pettiness and such at lower levels is ridiculous. If people exerted as much time to get the job done as they do "playing the game," I think everyone everywhere would be much happier and productive. It must be cabin fever!!

All in all, however, these feelings are truly petty considering the more important aspects in life. I’d like to take a moment to offer my condolences to A-ONE’s managing editor, and my friends, Joe and Lisa Mirando. Lisa’s mother passed away last week. I always remember Joe, when we happened to be mentioning mothers-in-law, that his was "really cool." Our thoughts are with Lisa and Joe in this time of grief.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. This has been a simply terrible week for me. My mother-in-law died unexpectedly late last week, and we are in the process of picking up the pieces and trying to get back to normal... whatever that is.

Now I know that mothers-in-law are often the butt of jokes, and often quite deservedly. But my mother-in-law was different. We got along so well that people often thought that we were mother and son. Heck, she took an interest in me before my wife did! Of course, she sensed that I was interested in her daughter and that her daughter was interested in me. She seldom meddled, and even when she did so she kept it to a minimum.

She was also my wife’s best friend, and that makes it even harder. You hear that an awful lot when someone passes on, but it was really true in this case.

Although she was in her late seventies, she was interested in just about everything. She never surfed the web or browsed through newsgroups, but she was constantly asking questions about computers and what I did with them. You can tell a lot about a person by the questions they ask. Hers were always intelligent ones. She will be missed by everyone who knew her, and there will be an empty spot in our lives for a very long time.

As my own personal tribute to her, I called her favorite radio station and requested the song I used to tease her with.... MOTHER-IN-LAW. She always chuckled when that song came on.

I did have one simple thought about all of this (the only kind I'm capable of at the moment, I'm afraid). She passed away without anything unsaid between us. If there is anything that makes this time easier, that is it.

Well, I've burdened you with this for long enough. Let's get to the news and hints and stuff.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Pål Monstad asks:

"Is it possible to connect any SVGA monitor to a TT and get it to display TT high in b/w? My old TTM194 is broken and I miss the high resolution."

Dennis Vermeire tells Pål:

"If you install a graphic card in the TT, your SVGA monitor will be able to display the same resolution with this card in mono and colour.

The TT monitor output is a ECL signal, which your monitor can't handle.

Last summer Oxo Systems announced an ECL to VGA convertor for the TT in the French newsgroup, It would cost 300Ffr which is something like 380 Norwegian Crowns.

On the OXO website this convertor is not mentioned. Perhaps it's best to send them a mail, and see if this thing really exists or is just a piece of "ghostware"

mailto:oxo.systems@online.fr , they understand English. Normally I would write them myself, but I'm not exactly in their good books...."

Pål tells Dennis:

"Thanks, but I already know about graphics cards. I ask for one of my customers who doesn't have such a card. By the way: Anyone who want to sell me a TT graphics card? Matrix, Nova or Crazy Dot?"

Brian Van Tilborg jokingly tells Pål:

"Go to the end of the line Pål <grin>. I think I should get one first, even before Q-funk.

Anyway, there may be new cards in the future, and possibly old cards may become available as people purchase Milans."

Hallvard Tangeraas asks for info on CD "burning":

"For a while now, I've been collecting all my Atari software from loads and loads of disks over to a harddisk, in order to eventually make a CD-ROM out of it, keeping all in one place (the "disk-jockey" days are over!).

Now, I’m a little new to CD-ROM writing ("burning"), so I need a little advice here...

1) Since Atari files take up a LOT less space than PC and Mac counterparts, I’ve decided to keep the files uncompressed, ready to run from the CD. Many of the folders contain extensions in their filenames (i.e. "MSTERTRK.DEM") and I understand this is "illegal" for ISO-9660 CDs which I should make. Or is there another format I can use?

I don’t know too much about the different formats, but I know there’s something called "Joliet" - should I use this? Will it allow folders with extensions?

Many of the programs actually have sub-folders which they call upon with folder names such as that, so I don’t want to change them.

2) I’ve got all the Atari files on my Mac, accessed by MagiCMac. Because of that I’ve now got several files/folders with lower case filenames. I guess this will cause problems if I try running the CD on a standard ST without MagiC or whatever, but plain old TOS. I need to change the case of all files to UPPER case -is there a tool which can let me scan through a complete folder and look through all files/sub-folders, renaming those which aren’t in ALL UPPER case?

Alternatively, if there isn’t a suitable program for this around, is there a UNIX command sequence I can use with for example "Gemini"? My experience is that I can do just about anything in UNIX...

3) I’m going to make the CD with "Toast" on the Mac. I want to make it readable first of all for all STs, so some sort of ISO format is probably preferable -I need advice here, considering the above (folder extensions). Other than that I’m sticking to the old TOS standard of 8+3 characters. I also want to be able to read the CD on the Mac, a PC or whatever, but since ISO is readable on all platforms (or should be!) I guess this won’t be any problem."

Dennis Vermeire tells Hallvard:

"Any format except for MAC HFS should do, as long as the filenames are in 8+3 format there shouldn’t be a problem... if some of the folders or files have long filenames these will be truncated ie. MSTERTRACK.DEM => MSTERTR~.DEM

Joliet will do just fine but as stated above, do make sure there are no long filenames.

There’s no need to scan for upper/lower case, GEM will always display the files in UPPER case.

Do watch out for things like test.htm and TEST.HTM, I guess the syntax checker of Toast will warn you for this. If you really want to convert these files, then the Jinnee desktop which I recommended to you before, comes with a plugin for this kind of work...

As long as you stick to the 8+3 rule, your CD will be readable on any Atari."

"Max" asks for help with telnet:

"I've got this unused atari and I'm about to use it again.

Since my unix server hasn't got a display and my normal pc takes to long to boot, makes to much noise, etc etc I want to use my atari to telnet to the server and do all kind of things.

Anybody knows if this is possible? Do I need an ethernet adapter to do this? Serial cable? Parallel?

Will I need a hard disk? Can I use an ide harddisk? Do I need to solder an adapter for this?

I've got a 1040Ste with 1 mb ram. No hard disk or stuff like that."

Martin-Eric Racine tells Max:

"If all you need is telnet, install STiNG and TelStar on a floppy, then connect to your unix server using a null-modem cable on PPP.

STiNG and TelStar should fit on a single floppy. Set the modem port to its maximum 19200 baud and have a go at it."

Brian Van Tilborg adds:

"Just thought I would add. I believe HS modem will be necessary for such transfer rates. 19200 is the maximum a stock ST can do.

You will require the DRIVEN.PRG and the MFP.PRG programs from HS MODEM to be placed AHEAD of STING.PRG.

As for further mods. A hardware mod can get the serial port up to 34800.

Finally, sometime RSN will be an ethernet adapter for the ST. I believe this would be a luxury in your situation vs. your need."

Andy Williams asks for help getting his Atari on the internet:

"I am trying to get my Atari stfm on the net using Sting 1.22. However, every internet service provider I have spoken to can't provide me with the logon sequence I need for the sting "DIAL.SCR" file.

Can anyone please email me a working copy of their "DIAL.SCR" file and sting "DEFAULT.CFG" file along with the name and telephone number of a suitable service provider (preferably a free service provider).

I assume this is the problem, as so far all I have managed is a carrier detect signal and confirmation of 19200 bps followed by "link negotiation failed" after 37 seconds on the dialer."

Ken Macdonald tells Andy:

"Make sure you are using ALL the up to date versions! As in dialer.acc tcp, udp,...

Also, set up PAP in the dial.scr. There is a good chance that it will work with most ISPs."

John Garone adds:

"Another point would be to use HSMODEM7 for compatibility. As far as

login scripts are concerned, calling in to your ISP with a terminal program will show you what the prompts are to base your responses on."

Brian Van Tilborg mirrors my own thoughts when he posts:

"I can't believe these BIMBOS call themselves Internet Providers. They can't even provide the logon Sequence. Can't even tell Andy if they use PAP/Chap or some Script, PPP or if they support Cslip. I'll tell you, there are a lot of MORONS out there pretending to be experienced Internet Providers.

It's just as bad here in NA. Luckily, my Provider is actually knowledgeable.

This nonsense really ticks me off. Basic questions cannot be answered. It is truly sad."

Greg Martin asks:

"I am asking this for a friend, (bloody hell, sounds like I'm at the doctors about a suspicious rash <grin>), anyway is it possible to take the TOS 1.6 chips from a Ste and put them in an STFM 1040 to upgrade the TOS?"

Alan Gauton tells Greg:

"Not as far as I know - IIRC TOS 1.6 and 1.62 were too closely linked to the additional colour maps, new sound chip etc. and weren't portable. To do the upgrade the only real option were 2.06 and the multitasking OS's."

Greg replies:

"Yes it seems your right, I was chatting with someone, and they said you could only go up to TOS 1.4 on an STFM."

"Packet Slug" asks for help in finding an ST emulator:

"I am looking for a good win based ST Emulator that will do screenshots. Any suggestions?"

Nick Bales tells "Slug" that it...

"It depends on what you want to run. TosBox or Gemulator for GEM programs, WinSTon for games/demos. PaCifiST is good too, but it's a DOS program."

Well folks, that's it for this week. It's a bit shorter than normal, but time is short and there are other things that need to be done... aren't there always??

Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - 'Duck Dodger' And 'Marvin The Martian'!
Game Blast 2000 Award Winners!
Spring Lineup For Playstation!
Hot Products Starts NUON Division!
'Zombie Revenge'! And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Game Blast 2000 Award Winners are Announced

Ziff Davis' Computer Gaming World and Electronic Gaming Monthly announced the winners of the first ever Game Blast 2000 awards honoring the best PC and video games of 1999. As the leading magazines in their respective categories, Computer Gaming World and Electronic Gaming Monthly presented awards to the winners on January 20, 2000, at the Capella Events Center in the San Francisco Mission District.

Game Blast 2000, hosted by Computer Gaming World and Electronic Gaming Monthly and sponsored by Heat.Net, honors the top games in their respective genres in 29 different categories. Winners were chosen by the editors based upon a number of criteria: advancement of the gaming experience, performance within game genre or hardware component standards, and quality of innovation, play balance, and aesthetic presentation. Critical and popular acceptance were also given some consideration.

Besides being given awards at the ceremony on January 20, Game Blast 2000 winners will also be featured in the March issues of Computer Gaming World and Electronic Gaming Monthly.

The awards party will be broadcast online exclusively by GiveMeTalk! at http://www.givemetalk.com.

GAME BLAST 2000 VIDEO/CONSOLE GAME WINNERS

Game of the Year: All Systems
Winner: Soul Calibur (Dreamcast) -- Namco

Game of the Year: Dreamcast
Winner: Soul Calibur -- Namco

Game of the Year: Playstation
Winner: Gran Turismo 2 -- Sony Computer Entertainment America

Game of the Year: Nintendo 64
Winner: Mario Party -- Nintendo

Game of the Year: Handhelds

Winner: Mario Golf (Game Boy Color) -- Nintendo

Action Game of the Year
Winner: Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater (Playstation) -- Activision

Shooter of the Year
Winner: R-Type Delta (Playstation) -- Agetec

Adventure Game of the Year
Winner: Dino Crisis (Playstation) -- Capcom

Strategy Game of the Year
Winner: Worms Armageddon (Playstation/Dreamcast) -- Hasbro

Multiplayer Game of the Year
Winner: You Don’t Know Jack (Playstation) -- Sierra

Sports Game of the Year
Winner: Madden NFL 2000 (Playstation and Nintendo 64) -- Electronic Arts

Fighting Game of the Year
Winner: Soul Calibur (Dreamcast) -- Namco

Racing Game of the Year
Winner: Gran Turismo 2 (Playstation) -- Sony Computer Entertainment America

RPG of the Year
Winner: Final Fantasy VIII (Playstation) -- Square EA

Puzzle Game of the Year
Winner: Q*Bert (Playstation) -- Hasbro

Best Graphics
Winner: Soul Calibur (Dreamcast) -- Namco

Best Music
Winner: Final Fantasy VIII (Playstation) -- Square EA

Best Sound Effects
Winner: Medal of Honor (Playstation) -- Electronic Arts

GAME BLAST 2000 PC GAME WINNERS

Game of the Year
Winner: Unreal Tournament -- Epic Megagames/GT Interactive

Action Game of the Year
Winner: Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear -- Red Storm Entertainment

Sports Game of the Year
Winner: High Heat 2000 -- 3DO

Role-Playing Game of the Year
Winner: Planescape: Torment -- Interplay

Adventure Game of the Year
Winner: Outcast -- Infogames

Science Fiction Simulation of the Year

Winner: Freespace 2: Interplay

Racing Game of the Year
Winner: Need for Speed: High Stakes -- Electronic Arts

Wargame of the Year:
Winner: Sid Meier’s Antietam! -- Firaxis

Simulation of the Year
Winner: MiG Alley -- Empire

Strategy Game of the Year
Winner: Homeworld -- Sierra

Multiplayer Gaming
Winner: Team Fortress Classic -- Sierra

Puzzle/Classic Game of the Year
Winner: Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey -- Empire

Sony Computer Entertainment America Announces Strong PlayStation Software Line-Up for Spring 2000

Sony Computer Entertainment America announced Monday an impressive software line-up for spring 2000, offering something for every type of PlayStation gamer. Software titles currently scheduled for release during the spring season, exclusively for the PlayStation game console, include:

* Speed Punks -- April 18, 2000*
* Wild Arms 2 -- May 2, 2000*
* MediEvil II -- May 9, 2000*
* Grind Session -- May 23, 2000*
* The Legend of Dragoon -- June 13, 2000*

‘‘The spring season promises to be exceptional for PlayStation gamers, with marquis software titles scheduled for release in a variety of genres," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. ‘‘There are now 25 million PlayStation owners in the United States -- equating to a PlayStation in one out of every four U.S. households -- so it is important that we continue to support the platform and deliver quality software for a broad audience."

Speed Punks

Speed Punks is cart racing with attitude. School’s out and racing’s in for the cast of six wacky characters. Each boasts their own custom-built cart, and will encounter wild and dangerous tracks and utilize numerous power-ups and projectiles to cheat their way to the finish line. Game features include:

-- Six wacky racers (plus hidden bonus characters), each with their own quirky personality and racing style
-- Twelve unique tracks -- each with a variety of shortcuts to discover and master
-- Customizable league system
-- Crazy power-ups and projectiles including missiles, bombs, slime,

machine guns and more
-- Multi-player modes for two-to-four players at once (Multi Tap required for three or more players)
-- Tournament and time attack modes
-- Sharp, vivid 3D graphics and vibrant soundtrack
-- Developed by FunCom; produced by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

Wild Arms 2

The long-awaited sequel to 1997's role-playing hit Wild Arms, Wild Arms 2 brings back the best features of the original while incorporating a new graphics engine to support a fully polygonal world, new characters and a fresh, compelling storyline. Wild Arms 2 continues the PlayStation tradition of excellent RPG action with gameplay features including:

-- All new, improved graphics with fully-rendered 3D world including 3D towns, maps and dungeons
-- Intriguing storyline, intelligent puzzles and strategic battles provide enormous gameplay depth
-- Players can now control and position the camera for the best views
-- Fantastical 3D turn-based battles scenes push the capabilities of the PlayStation game console
-- Extremely action oriented: pick up items, use tools, throw objects, and place and ignite bombs
-- Select from three characters, each with their own unique abilities; each character begins at a different starting point in the adventure, and features enhanced animations
-- Highly compelling soundtrack complements gameplay
-- Produced by Contrail, the makers of Wild Arms and Legend of Legaia

MediEvil II

The sequel to the gothic 1998 hit, MediEvil II finds the undead anti-hero Sir Daniel Fortesque awakened once again from his peaceful eternal slumber to fight foul demons and evil villains in a twisted gothic version of Victorian London. Zarok's spell book has now fallen into the hands of the evil occultist Lord Palethorne, who has unleashed a spell upon the land, creating ghoulish chaos, making the dead walk the earth and creating untold evil. Key game features include:

-- More playable characters: DanHand, Headless Dan and Dan-kenstein modes
-- Additional main characters: an Egyptian princess love interest, a mad professor who advises
-- Sir Dan on his missions, a fast-talking all-knowing help ghost, and more
-- New enemy characters: Lord Palethorne and his henchmen are aided and abetted by clumsy zombies, fat bearded women, sneaky imps and other bizarre monsters
-- A new arsenal of weapons designed to battle the peculiar cast of villains, including a gatling gun, bomb, blunderbuss, pistol, torch and more
-- Deep, spooky and devilishly humorous storyline set in a twisted, gothic version of Victorian London
-- New character moves; larger, more detailed worlds; involved puzzle-solving; improved character interaction and enemy artificial intelligence; and more sub-quests and mini-games
-- Designed and developed by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

Grind Session

Grind Session brings the heart and soul of skateboarding to the PlayStation game console. Skate against or as a pro skater and feel the exhilaration of hitting big air, pulling off the impossible, and riding the concrete waves, all to a cool alternative soundtrack. Grind Session combines the spirit and arcade-style action of extreme sports with the thrill of hardcore skateboarding. Gamers will compete in Street and Tournament competitions, ride half-pipes, perform challenging tricks for skate magazine covers and videos, and feel the incredible sensation that only a true skater can.

Game features include:

-- Eight unique, action-packed, fully interactive freestyle 3D areas, featuring real Van’s Triple Crown(TM) skate park configurations
-- Four different one-player modes (Tournament, Freestyle, Practice and Training) and a variety of multi-player modes (Vs., Teamplay, Competition, Tech Challenge, S-K-A-T-E, and Endurance)
-- Ten different cool characters boasting true moves and animations for real-life riders including Daewon Song, Willie Santos, Pigpen, Jon Cardiel, Ed Templeton and Carabeth Burnside
-- Hundreds of tricks, sponsored and customizable gear, smart camera with dynamic views for tricks and moves, and replay mode with up-close and wide angle views
-- Music tracks from Man Or Astroman, Sonic Youth, Suicidal Tendencies, Zen Guerilla, Cornelius, GZA, DJ Shadow, KRS-One and more
-- Developed by Shaba Games

The Legend of Dragoon

One of the most eagerly anticipated role-playing games this year, The Legend of Dragoon leads gamers on an unbelievable journey featuring stunning graphics and a deeply innovative game design. Developed over a three year time period by a team of more than 100, and spanning four CDs, The Legend of Dragoon challenges RPG enthusiasts and adventure gamers to delve into an enormous fantasy world and experience one of the biggest epic role-playing adventures ever created.

The legend begins in a land of floating cities, mysterious energy crystals and 108 races. Race 107, the ‘‘Winged Ones," used their superior magical powers and flying abilities to enslave the humans, the 106th race, and reign supreme for 10,000 years. The humans battled for their freedom in the Great Dragon Wars, and won only after they acquired the ability to use the spiritual forces of the Dragon, the 105th race, and transform themselves into ‘‘Dragoons." A legend speaks of the 108th race, which some say is a being that will bring peace and happiness to all, and others say will unleash an evil far beyond the darkest nightmares.

Game features include:

-- Nine characters, each with their own specialty, additional skills and Dragoon magic -- each character is associated with their own element, such as fire, water, wind, lightening, earth, light and dark
-- Innovative and unique tactical combat system known as the "Additional" system allows players to strike multiple attacks in one sequence -- "Additional" system is used differently in human and Dragoon forms
-- More than 40 minutes of incredible, stunning computer graphics
-- An intense storyline that unfolds over more than 80 hours of gameplay -- players can transform into a Dragoon spirit for an even deeper gameplay experience
-- Hundreds of items to collect and use (some specific to each character’s strengths) including magic and other interactive elements to enhance your adventure.
-- Incredible special effects and more than 650 beautifully pre-rendered

backgrounds maximizing the latest graphics technologies
-- Developed by Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

Frightfest Action-Based Arcade Sensation
’Zombie Revenge’ Comes Home for Sega Dreamcast

Sega of America, Inc. announced Tuesday the release of the action-packed horror game ‘‘Zombie Revenge" for the 128-bit, Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast. A side story to the hit ‘‘The House of the Dead" series, ‘‘Zombie Revenge" raises the walking undead from their graves again and it’s up to players to put them back to sleep ... permanently. The extremely detailed 3D graphics immerse gamers in realistic cinematic locations as they battle the less-than-festive parade of maniacal mutants. ‘‘Zombie Revenge" was developed using Sega’s Naomi arcade technology, so the home version is a picture-perfect translation with exclusive features added just for Sega Dreamcast, including new modes and mini-games. ‘‘Zombie Revenge" is available at retailers nationwide for $49.95.

In ‘‘Zombie Revenge," the action starts in the town of Woodside City, where a government experiment to turn the undead into soldiers has gone awry. To remedy this dire situation, players assume the role of one of three characters -- Stick Breitling, Linda Rotta, or Rikiya Busujima. Players can single-handedly punch, kick and shoot their way through hordes of zombies or opt to tag team the enemy with a friend. Each character has distinct combos, along with moves such as dash, guard, rolling and charged attacks. Although players are equipped with firearms to fight the throngs of ghastly goons, any weapons found lying around -- from flame-throwers to power drills -- become fair game. For the nostalgic effect, some zombies are pulled straight from ‘‘House of the Dead," while others are fresh from the morgue.

‘‘Sega has a deeply rooted heritage in the video game industry with a tradition of delivering ground-breaking arcade hits," said Charles Bellfield, director of marketing communications, Sega of America. ‘‘In 2000, we are moving ahead full throttle to meet gamers’ demands by bringing these popular arcade titles to Sega Dreamcast with exclusive new features that makes the gameplay more dynamic than ever before."

‘‘Zombie Revenge" features seven different interactive environments -- each showcasing the incredible 3D graphics in the game -- including warehouses, neighborhoods, subways, dark back alleys and even the original House of the Dead area! Each character is also fully detailed, right down to the rotting flesh of their undead adversaries. The creepy realism of the zombies will keep gamers inside their homes for hours.

Exclusive features for the Sega Dreamcast version of ‘‘Zombie Revenge" include three new modes of gameplay: Original, Fighting, and Vs. Boss Mode. In the Original mode, players can choose the Normal (arcade single player) mode, the weaponless Bare Knuckle-style or the fully strapped Gun Mode. The Fighting Mode pits you against a friend or the computer in a one-on-one death match. Lastly, Vs. Boss Mode allows gamers to fight through each boss encounter without going through the stages in the game.

Also featured in the Sega Dreamcast version will be two VMU mini-games: Zombie Fishing and Zombie Doubt. Zombie Fishing is a ghoulish version of ‘‘Sega Bass Fishing(TM)," which involves reeling in the underwater undead. The Zombie Doubt mini-game is an exercise in memory skills. Based on how

well you do on these mini-games, along with the collection of items from Original mode, you raise a zombie hero or heroine to do battle in Fighting mode, while also unlocking secrets in Original mode.

‘‘Zombie Revenge" is currently available at retailers nationwide and at sega.com for $49.95.

Acclaim Lets the Fur Fly with Fur Fighters for Sega Dreamcast and PC

Acclaim Entertainment Tuesday announced the development of Fur Fighters, a new action/adventure shoot-em-up due for Sega Dreamcast and PC this Spring. Developed by Bizarre Creations, the game delivers fluff-flying fun by combining huggable stuffed animals with a massive arsenal, allowing gamers to send the fur flying through five massive environments against the computer or their friends in the game’s ‘‘Fluffmatches."

‘‘Fur Fighters takes the action platformer to the next level for both Sega Dreamcast and PC," said Noah Ullman, marketing manager at Acclaim Entertainment. ‘‘Great story line, hilarious off-the-wall game play, and insane character design wrapped in cutting-edge graphics deliver a new benchmark in gaming. The game is sure to appeal to younger and older gamers alike."

In Fur Fighters, gamers take command of an elite force of stuffed animals in their attempt to defeat General Viggo and his evil forces. The Fur Fighters must battle their way through legions of teddy bear warriors, solve diabolical puzzles, and transform their mutated kin to save their village, and ultimately the world, from Viggo’s wicked scheme.

Each of the six controllable Fur Fighters has a unique and easily recognizable skill, which players can use to gain access to areas that the other Fur Fighters cannot reach. For example, Bungalow, a kangaroo, can leap higher than the other characters to reach inaccessible ledges. To finish the game, players must learn to use each of the Fur Fighter’s special skills at just the right moment.

Fur Fighters is scheduled to ship this Spring, and will be supported by a comprehensive marketing plan targeting the Sega Dreamcast and PC gamer while laying the groundwork for a new Acclaim brand. Specific marketing details include print advertisements in gaming, trade and lifestyle publications, targeted television spots, a massive Internet website at www.furfighters.com, and Internet advertising to drive traffic.

‘‘The story is incredible and the technology delivers the content with glorious graphics, sound, control, and immersion," added Ullman. ‘‘Our marketing program will penetrate both the hardcore and casual gaming markets, but if the early reviews are any indication, word-of-mouth will play a major role in communicating the depth and quality of the game play."

Infogrames North America, Inc. Zaps You Into the 24th 1/2 Century With Duck Dodgers for Nintendo 64

Famous Duck Goes Head-To-Head With

Marvin The Martian This Summer

Grab your ray guns!

Infogrames North America, Inc. announced today that it is bringing one of the world’s favorite ducks, Daffy, to the Nintendo 64 game console in a new 3D action-adventure title to reach retail stores this summer. Duck Dodgers, savior of the Universe, must stop Marvin the Martian from his diabolical plan of destroying the Earth. Can you do it Duck Dodgers? Can you save the Earth? We’re counting on you!

Marvin has built the Ultimate Weapon as part of his Ultimate Plan to wipe out our planet. But there’s just one small problem ... he doesn’t have the energy to power his new toy! To get it, Marvin sends his minions out to the nearby planets to collect energy atoms. Lucky for us, our klutzy hero, Duck Dodgers, and his trusty sidekick Porky Pig, are ready to take on Marvin and his minions.

Players will explore five huge worlds, each world featuring varied gameplay, such as sewage surfing and silly boss battles. In addition, our cartoon pals will be armed with gizmos galore, including the ACME jetpack, raygun, boxing gloves, and Instant Martian decoys to aid them in their quest to foil Marvin’s plan.

‘‘Modeled after Chuck Jones’ Duck Dodgers in the 24th 1/2 Century, the true-to-life animation and entertaining gameplay in Duck Dodgers gives players the feeling of being in a Looney Tunes cartoon, " said Larry Lee, director of marketing for Infogrames North America, Inc.’s Family Label. ‘‘Daffy Duck’s clumsy and hilarious adventures will appeal to children of all ages for hours on end."

Gamers can expect to see Duck Dodgers on Nintendo 64 this summer at most major retail stores.

Infogrames North America, Inc. Invades Earth On Game Boy Color With Looney Tunes Collector: Alert!

The First of a New Adventure Collection Series Will Thrill Looney Tunes Fans This Fall

Earthlings Beware!

Marvin The Martian is up to his old antics trying to destroy the earth in Infogrames North America, Inc.’s new Game Boy Color title, Looney Tunes Collector: Alert! The first title in the new Looney Tunes Collector series, Alert! is an innovative adventure collection game that will appeal to Looney Tunes lovers everywhere when it reaches retail stores this fall.

The adventure begins with Bugs Bunny en route to Pismo Beach for a vacation. During his preparation Bugs Bunny overhears Marvin yelling at his dog, K9 for throwing away ten parts of a teleporter needed to blow up the Earth. Now, Bugs Bunny must find all ten parts to save the world from Marvin’s devious plans.

Players, as Bugs Bunny, will work their way through twenty graphically

stunning environments searching for teleporter parts and encountering up to 47 other Looney Tunes characters including Witch Hazel, Yosemite Sam, Elmer Fudd, Daffy Duck, Foghorn Leghorn and many more. These characters are collected by the player and can be called upon throughout the game to help foil Marvin’s attempt to destroy Earth.

In addition, players will be able to compare and trade their collection of characters with friends who also have Alert! They will have the chance to collect, trade and play even more missions with a planned second title in the Looney Tunes Collector series, to be announced soon.

‘‘Looney Tunes Collector: Alert! is the type of game that really taps into the fascination that children have with collecting things," said Larry Lee, director of marketing for Infogrames North America, Inc.’s Family Label.

‘‘And the world of Looney Tunes and its extensive realm of characters offers the perfect backdrop for the adventure/collecting genre that has become so popular. Alert! will be a game that children love and parents cherish."

Another fascinating element of the game will include six head-to-head mini-games utilizing the infrared and cable link features of the Game Boy Color. Players will be able to win different characters from their friends by battling in real-time competitions such as The Ping-Pong Bomb, The Rocket and The Rainbow Cannon Ball.

Or, they can compete just for fun by playing these classic games: Rock, Paper, Scissors, Musical Chairs and Simon Says.

Looney Tunes Collector: Alert! for Game Boy Color will reach stores in time for the holiday rush this fall.

THQ Ships ’Micro Machines 1 and 2: Twin Turbo’ for Game Boy Color System

THQ Inc. announced the release of its first Micro Machines title for the Game Boy Color, ‘‘Micro Machinesfi 1 and 2: Twin Turbo."

Developed by Codemasters, THQ is delivering the most popular miniature-scale racing games to the most popular hand-held system. ‘‘Micro Machines 1 and 2: Twin Turbo" combines two classic racing games on one cartridge and is now available at major retail outlets nationwide for the suggested retail price of $29.95.

‘‘Based on one of the most recognized worldwide brands, ’Micro Machines 1 and 2: Twin Turbo’ for the Game Boy Color maintains a huge crossover," said Peter Dille, vice president of marketing, THQ. ‘‘With its famous backyard garden and pool table tracks, the popular Game Boy Color system will give video game and Micro Machines fans a rich hand-held racing experience."

‘‘Micro Machines, a brand of Hasbro Inc., has been a hit with kids for 15 years and is known for delivering detailed worlds of micro-sized play that allow kids to build, control and master their play tasks," said Chris Connolly, vice president of vehicle brands, Hasbro.

Offered in brilliant color, ‘‘Micro Machines 1 and 2: Twin Turbo" is two games on one cartridge. Players will be able to choose from more than 10 unique racing modes, and more than 40 different tracks. All the classic race cars are featured plus authentic Micro Machines sports cars, tanks and helicopters -- in all, more than 15 diverse miniature-scaled vehicles and bonus vehicles.

Eidos Interactive and Enix America Announce Dragon Warrior Monsters for the Game Boy Color

Eidos Interactive and Enix America announced Thursday the monster builder Dragon Warrior Monsters for Game Boy Color is now shipping.

Based on the immensely popular Dragon Quest/Warrior series, Dragon Warrior Monsters puts gamers in the role of Terry, a young hero whose sister gets kidnapped by a monster who flees to the Kingdom of GreatTree. In order to rescue his sister, Terry must recruit, train, battle and breed an army of monsters to win the Starry Night Tournament and free his sister. With randomly generated Mystic Worlds to explore, the gamer will never tire of discovering the magical world of GreatTree.

Dragon Warrior Monsters features over 200 unique monsters across 10 separate families. The gamer can completely customize his/her menagerie and create specific monsters by mating the appropriate parents; the offspring will inherit the skills and magic abilities of the parents and grandparents. And if that’s not enough, gamers can connect their Game Boy Color machines with the Link Cable and fight and trade monsters with each other.

Paul Handelman, president of Enix USA comments, ‘‘We are extremely excited to be working with Eidos to bring this great game to North America. The Dragon Quest/Warrior series is one of the most popular RPG series in the world, and we are happy to see Dragon Warrior Monsters receive such great press."

Eidos Vice President of Marketing, Paul Baldwin states, ‘‘With the incredible number of Game Boy Color games coming out, it is really important to deliver a new and unique gaming experience. Dragon Warrior Monsters features an incredible amount of depth in such a jam-packed cartridge."

Hot Products Establishes NUON Peripherals Division

Hot Products Inc. Monday announced the creation of a dedicated peripherals division to support VM Labs Inc. NUON technology.

NUON is an exciting technology that transforms passive digital video products such as DVD players, digital satellite receivers and digital set-top boxes into complete interactive video entertainment systems.

The creation of this division will further confirm HPI’s commitment, to all VM Lab’s licensed partners, which include such recognized brand names as: Motorola, Samsung, Toshiba and Raite. As a strategic licensed partner this will escalate HPI’s manufacturing and marketing of NUON enhanced accessory

and peripheral products.

HPI’s new peripherals division will target the growing opportunities within the Fortune 100 OEM community while addressing the emerging NUON retail arena.

With extensive industry experience in engineering, manufacturing and quality assurance, Greg Struthers, HPI’s executive vice president will assume the role of vice president and direct its operation.

‘‘Greg is the ideal person to take control," stated James Copland, HPI’s chairman & chief executive officer.

Fortune 100 companies have achieved global brand status through solid reputations for leading state-of-the-art technology product services and customer service, as compared to the traditional retail channel where the focus tends to be on price alone. Servicing OEM customers requires a serious investment of time to fully understand the customer’s business model.

It also requires a serious allocation of resources to supply systems solutions, high quality products, superior customer service that will safeguard the reputations of these companies.

Struthers stated, ‘‘We believe the formation of this NUON Peripherals Division firmly states HPI’s long term commitment to VM Labs, and its licensed partners and that NUON will revolutionize the current DVD and Set-Top Box industry."

Hot Products Inc. (HPI) is a publicly traded company and a diversified developer of innovative products that focus on the retail, corporate, and OEM segments of the personal computer, video game, automotive road emergency-survival, and outdoor survival categories.

The company holds numerous U.S. patents for its technology developments, which it licenses for use to other multi-national corporations. HPI is a strategic licensed partner of VM Labs Inc., NUON technology. HPI markets an expanding range of accessory products which incorporate this technology to major manufacturers of DVD players and set-top boxes that also support the NUON platform.

Currently, the company’s products are sold in over 21 countries around the world.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Delphi Forums and Well Engaged Join To Launch Prospero Technologies

New Company to Deliver Audience Activation Solutions for Web Businesses

Delphi Forums and Well Engaged, LLC, the two leading providers of Internet community solutions, today announced they have joined to launch a new company, Prospero Technologies. Building on the synergies between Delphi and Well Engaged, Prospero will deliver an audience activation solution, designed to help businesses attract, engage and understand their Web audiences, and to derive business value from that interaction.

Prospero counts more than 200 clients, including Hasbro, Fox, CBS SportsLine, Washingtonpost.com, IDG.net, the Wall Street Journal Interactive, HBO and the Warner Music Group. These customers use the Prospero platform through an application service provider (ASP) model. The integrated platform provides loyalty-building features for end-users as well as reporting capabilities that improve each client's understanding of audience behavior and preferences. The benefits of Prospero's solution are twofold: build online customer loyalty and insight; and simplify application management by centralizing all features and management tools.

''We are excited about benefiting from the combined expertise of Delphi and Well Engaged," said Jill Corral, Senior Editor with IDG.net, the world's largest online network of technology specific Web sites. ''We have already gained great insight into our audience's needs and requirements by adding interactivity to our site, and look forward to enhancing both our audience application offerings and our own management tools through the Prospero platform."

''Prospero will be the first Internet solutions company that gives businesses the tools they need to get closer to their customers, while enabling them to deliver an integrated online experience," said Dan Bruns, president and CEO of Prospero Technologies. ''Delphi and Well Engaged combine to form a powerful new player that will provide crucial infrastructure solutions to help Web businesses become successful."

Products and Services

Prospero's wide range of services and tools add value to its ASP business model. Prospero's audience activation features include:

* interactive end-user tools such as feature-rich message boards, chat and polling to optimize user loyalty and length of stay,
* fully customizable user interface to maintain brand consistency,
* site-wide management controls and reporting capabilities to help customers better understand audience preferences and behavior,
* revenue-generating tools such as e-commerce, advertising serving and targeting to aid in monetization of site activity,
* cross-promotion across the entire Prospero network of sites to boost site traffic,
* and professional services such as application hosting, content moderation, and business consulting.

Prospero's technology and services are delivered by a team of Internet industry pioneers, with expertise in the areas of Internet community and e-commerce technology solutions, strategic consulting, business-to-business marketing, and Internet sales. Dan Bruns, former chairman and CEO of Delphi Forums, is now president and CEO of Prospero. Bruce Katz, former chairman and CEO of Well Engaged, is chairman of Prospero. Bruns and Katz were both pioneers in the online community services market. Katz developed the first Web-based discussion software while acting as the CEO of The WELL and has over nine years' experience with online businesses. Bruns has more than fifteen years of experience with the Internet, launching and directing

Delphi as the first commercial online service to provide access to the Internet.

‘‘By joining forces between Delphi and Well Engaged, the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts," said Katz. ‘‘Separately, each company has proven the value of interactive applications as traffic- and loyalty-builders. Together, our integrated suite of tools and services will help accelerate the conversion of site visitors into brand enthusiasts. Prospero’s opportunity is tremendous."

‘‘Delphi has given Hasbro the ability to introduce and develop community around our brands quickly," commented Craig Bloem, Senior Internet Marketing Manager for Hasbro, Inc. ‘‘That community - and ability to move quickly - have been key in fostering brand loyalty for our games, such as MechWarrior and Atari. We expect the combined resources of Delphi and Well Engaged to only enhance this important service."

‘‘In addition to being an effective tool for engaging Petopia.com’s Web visitors, Well Engaged has given our customers reasons to come back more often and stay longer," said Roger Smith, Vice President, Internet Site Strategy and Development at Petopia.com. ‘‘We are looking forward to an even greater return on investment from the centralized reporting tools in the Prospero technology platform."

Prospero Technologies will be headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with a West Coast office in Sausalito, California. With more than 100 employees, both locations are currently hiring to accelerate growth. To further support Prospero’s exclusive business-to-business focus, the Delphi Forums collection of self-managed consumer communities, catalogued at http://www.delphi.com, will now operate as a new entity, under a separate management team.

Agreement details are subject to final completion.

E-tailers Look For Profits With Net-only Products

Taking a page from direct sales companies such as L.L. Bean and Dell Computer, a growing number of e-commerce firms are introducing products that consumers can only buy online.

The new Internet-only products could help profit-pressed e-tailers improve their bottom lines, just like supermarkets use in-house brands, such as Lady Lee and Safeway Select, to boost their razor-thin margins. The new products could also help product manufacturers avoid competing with their distributors and retailers and give them some needed Internet cache.

"This is a potential anecdote to the bleak margin outlook of many e-commerce companies and the channel conflict concerns of traditional manufacturers," said Forrester Research e-commerce analyst Evie Black Dykema.

Among the new and upcoming products are:

* Pets.com-branded dog food, cat food and kitty litter, to be sold on the e-commerce site beginning in the first half of this year.
* Customized Nike running and training shoes. Consumers can pick the colors, trim and even add their own names to the shoes.

* Personal care products from Ingredients.com. Customers can choose the ingredients they want such as chamomile or lavender for their desired effect.

The Internet-only products come as investors have put increasing pressure on e-tailers to show profits. Despite reporting huge gains in holiday sales, e-commerce leader Amazon.com, for instance, is down 34 percent from its 52-week high of $106.69 set last month. Meanwhile, CDNow, eToys and Barnesandnoble.com are all trading at or near their 52-week lows.

At the same time, several major manufacturers have had a difficult time figuring out the correct Internet strategy. Struggling apparel maker Levi Strauss, for example, recently decided to scale back its Internet store because of slow sales and conflicts with its resellers; the company plans to market its products online through traditional retailers.

Pure-play online merchants may find the same problems in selling their own products online. But for now, a number of them are pressing forward.

Ingredients.com was one of the first firms to create a Web-only brand, according to company founder Kathryn Lagados. The company saw the Internet as an opportunity to let consumers customize their own bath and beauty products to suit their needs.

Because the company is offering its own line of products, it doesn’t have to pay manufacturers such as Estee Lauder to sell their high-priced branded products. Instead, the company sees 75 percent to 80 percent profit margins on the goods it sells, Lagados said.

"Our margins are much greater than a department store or a retailer that aggregates other manufacturers’ products," she said. "We thought if we’re going to build a brand, we want to have equity in the products themselves."

For Pets.com, the idea of turning its name brand into profits is key to selling its own line of pet products, the company said in a regulatory filing. The company, which is in an SEC-mandated quiet period preceding its initial public offering, could use all the help it can get when it comes to profits.

During this past quarter, the goods Pets.com sold cost the company more than twice what it sold them for. Combining those losses with the company’s operating and marketing expenses, Pets.com lost more than $42 million during the quarter.

But the company sees selling Pets.com dog food and cat food as a way of turning that around. "Our private label business should provide further margin enhancement, continued growth of our brand and enhanced consumer loyalty and repeat purchases," the company said. "Over time, we anticipate that 10 percent to 20 percent of our revenues will come from our private label products."

The concept of retailers selling self-branded products directly to consumers is as old as retail sales, said Gartner Group research director Kevin Murphy. But the trend did not take off until recently because retailers such as supermarkets felt they should keep trusted brands such as Crest or Palmolive on their shelves.

In recent years, as retail companies have merged and grown, they have built brand names that rival those of the manufacturers in terms of trust

and recognition, Murphy said. Already, in Europe, the giant retailers reserve significantly more space on their shelves for their own products than do their counterparts in the United States.

"There's been a shift in brand power from the manufacturers to the retailers," Murphy said. "The shift is more advanced in Europe than in the United States, but I expect as consolidation continues in retail in the United States, the same thing will take hold here."

Despite the shift in power, selling products only online could exclude a huge chunk of a company's potential customers. Most Americans have never shopped online, and even those who have tend to make the majority of their purchases offline.

Companies that sell Internet-only products also have to persuade consumers to buy products they have never seen or touched. And that too could prove a big impediment, Dykema said.

"The real issue of tangibility is a problem," she said. "Putting it on, smelling it is a part of the buying process. If you're trying to make decisions online, this could be problematic."

Ingredients.com will try to get around this barrier by mass mailing samples of its products to potential customers, Lagodos said. And despite the potential problems, she sees a huge upside to Internet-only products.

"It is inevitable that this strategy will be followed," she said. "This model capitalizes on the Web as an information and distribution channel."

AOL Enrages Smaller Competitors

The latest software from America Online Inc., the world's largest Internet provider, can prevent customers from using rival online services or corporate connections, enraging smaller competitors and even some of AOL's own subscribers.

Critics contend that version 5.0 of America Online's Internet software - which a national technology magazine this week suggested was ''the upgrade of death" - sometimes cripples existing Internet accounts with rival companies and prevents current AOL users from signing for service with competitors.

''You're faced with a company that knew its software would blow up the ability of its competitors," charged Bill Kirkner, chief technology officer for Prodigy Communications Corp., an AOL competitor that has roughly 2.2 million subscribers. ''We can get our customers through it if they call, but the solutions are sometimes a bit nasty to go through." These include deleting and reinstalling software, and sometimes tinkering with arcane technical settings.

America Online, with 20 million subscribers, said complaints about interference by its latest software are overblown and the result of customers not understanding that if they click yes during installation to allow AOL to become their default Internet browser, AOL largely takes over all the online functions on the computer.

''If a member picks yes, we make their lives simple," said Jeff Kimball,

AOL’s executive director for its client software. That means AOL seizes responsibility to display all Web pages, send all e-mail and exclusively perform other tasks online.

But rivals and some AOL customers complain that the selection, made with a single click of a mouse with no added explanation, also can suddenly interfere with connections to rival Internet services or business accounts.

‘‘It wipes out their previous settings, and the customer becomes an AOL customer," said Kirsten Witt, a spokeswoman for Mindspring Enterprises Inc., with 1.3 million subscribers. ‘‘In effect it allows the customer only to access AOL."

Peg Graham of New York installed AOL’s latest software on her laptop weeks after its initial release in October with disastrous results: Her computer crashed. In vain, her laptop manufacturer urged her to reinstall her entire Windows operating system - she did three times - before she finally paid a local repair shop $145 to fix it.

Afterward, she returned to an earlier version of AOL’s software she considers less risky. She suspects the new program suffered conflicts with the laptop’s network hardware she used to connect at her university.

‘‘There’s no person to hold accountable," fumed Graham, who’s now shopping for a new Internet service. ‘‘They just say, yes, we know there might be problems. It’s almost like brushing you off."

The complexity of modern software can lend itself to problems that are hard to diagnose and make it even harder to lay blame. Rival Internet providers won’t say exactly how many customers have reported problems, and no one admits even to calling AOL formally to complain about its software’s alleged behavior.

AOL spokeswoman Anne Bentley reported ‘‘very minimal calls about this," and many AOL customers said they installed the latest software without hassle.

But AOL’s own message boards, with thousands of complaints since Christmas, suggest these problems are more than fantasy concocted by disgruntled rivals. And this week, Windows Magazine’s Web site asked, ‘‘AOL 5.0: The Upgrade of Death?"

The magazine’s technical testing showed AOL’s software installed redundant files that threatened a computer’s stability. The software crashed the first time it ran. ‘‘AOL can reduce a perfectly good computer system to a paperweight," the magazine concluded.

Software problems like these also can take on enormous implications when a company becomes as dominant as AOL, which last week announced its $145 billion mega-merger with Time Warner Inc. That’s a deal that will allow AOL to distribute this new software with Time Warner products, including its magazines, which draw 120 million readers. So far, about 8 million of AOL’s 20 million customers have installed the new software.

The federal government last year pursued high-profile antitrust complaints against Microsoft and Intel, proving that even goliaths of the nation’s booming high-tech industry aren’t beyond its regulatory scope.

Indeed, as AOL Chairman Steve Case testified before Congress last April

about high-speed Internet connections, he drew a mild rebuke from Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., who cautioned that AOL one day could run up against antitrust laws because of its own dominance.

‘‘They’re still a young-company mentality," said Frank Soler of San Francisco, an AOL subscriber since its earliest days who won’t install the latest software for fear of its effects. ‘‘They could find themselves in a heck of a lot of trouble. Somebody might accuse them of trying to do away with competitors. They have to be very careful how they proceed."

Texas Company Accuses Yahoo Of Privacy Violations

Yahoo has been accused by closely held Universal Image of violating Texas’ anti-stalking law by allegedly tracking computer users’ every movement on the Internet without their consent.

Universal Image, which does business as Chalkboardtalk.com on the Web, made the claim as part of a $4 billion lawsuit against Yahoo and its Yahoo Broadcast unit. Dallas-based Universal Image, an educational video provider, filed the suit in December.

Universal Image has asked a Dallas judge to declare that Yahoo violated state law through the use of "cookies"--files attached to the computer of an Internet user that collect such information as names and addresses, Universal Image’s attorneys said.

The lawsuit "concerns the right of privacy of every Internet user in America," said Larry Friedman, an attorney for Universal Image.

A Yahoo representative declined comment.

Mitnick Released From Prison

Kevin Mitnick, one of the world’s most notorious computer hackers, walked off the Lompoc, Calif., prison grounds this morning and into the arms of his parents, ending nearly five years of incarceration.

Mitnick, 36, may be free, but he will not be able to use a computer for another three years without the permission of his probation officer.

The conditions of his parole will undoubtedly hamper his ability to find gainful employment, as most companies and organizations require computer use. The convicted hacker also will have to forgo email and reach friends and family members the old-fashioned way: through a land-line telephone.

Mitnick could not immediately be reached for comment.

Law enforcement officers and counselors have described Mitnick as a loner who found a sense of power through his computer.

His obsession with breaking into computer systems and either stealing company files or tinkering with software as pranks began when he was a teen-ager growing up in the Los Angeles area, according to assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Painter, who prosecuted Mitnick in 1995.

His first brush with the law came in 1981, when as a 17-year-old he was arrested for stealing computer manuals from Pacific Bell's switching center in Los Angeles. He was prosecuted as a juvenile and sentenced to probation, Painter said.

A year later he was caught breaking into computers at the University of Southern California and was jailed for six months.

He was caught several other times, and after an arrest in 1988 on similar hacking charges, his lawyer convinced a judge that Mitnick's problem was similar to a drug or gambling addiction. He served one year at a low-security federal prison in Lompoc, and after his release, he underwent treatment similar to the 12-step Alcoholics Anonymous model, Painter said.

Later, Mitnick violated the conditions of his parole and had a warrant issued for his arrest. He went underground in 1992.

For nearly three years, FBI agents suspected Mitnick of attacking systems belonging to software makers, ISPs and educational institutions including Netcom, Colorado Supernet, Motorola, Nokia, Fujistu, Novell, NEC, Sun Microsystems and USC.

He eluded authorities until 1995, when he hacked into the computer files belonging to Tsutomu Shimomura, a researcher at the federally financed San Diego Supercomputer Center.

Two months after the hack, Shimomura, a skilled computer security expert, tracked down Mitnick in Raleigh, N.C.

Mitnick was arrested in February 1995 and held without bail. He served nearly four years in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles while awaiting trial in federal court. He pleaded guilty March 26 to seven counts of wire fraud, computer fraud and illegal interception of a wire communication.

Mitnick was then sentenced to six months at the medium-security federal prison in Lompoc, where he worked as a groundskeeper while serving his term.

His arrest and conviction was cause for celebration for Shimomura and federal authorities, but many followers came to Mitnick's defense--even setting up a "Free Kevin" Web site.

Instead of serving as a deterrent, Mitnick's arrest may have sparked a new breed of hackers, said Mitnick's court-appointed attorney, Donald C. Randolph, of Santa Monica, Calif.

"I'm afraid it has had exactly the opposite effect," Randolph said. "The government didn't distinguish between computer prankster and computer terrorist in prosecuting Kevin Mitnick. The distinction is appreciated by the upcoming 20-something generation who perfectly understand the difference."

Randolph criticized federal authorities for exaggerating Mitnick's prowess. "He never deprived owners of their unfettered use of their computers," he said of his client. "He just peeked at it. Prosecutors couldn't admit they were pursuing a peeker; they had to go after the myth they created."

Painter, the assistant U.S. attorney who prosecuted the case, countered that Mitnick was much more than someone who simply "peeked" at other people’s files.

"We didn’t prosecute this case with the goal of making Mitnick an example," Painter said. "His conduct warranted it. He was one of the most prolific computer hackers, and for two and a half years he was on a virtual hacking spree against a whole panoply of enemies."

Shimomura and New York Times writer John Markoff later co-authored a book about Mitnick titled "Takedown: The Pursuit and Capture of America’s Most Wanted Outlaw."

Judge Reinstates Order Against Microsoft Java Products

In the latest chapter in the legal battle between two rival software titans, a federal judge on Tuesday reinstated an order forcing Microsoft Corp. to change software based on the Java programming language created by Sun Microsystems Inc.

Judge Ronald Whyte in U.S. District Court here reinstated on different grounds a November 1998, injunction that was overturned by an appeals court last August.

The injunction stemmed from a suit Sun filed in 1997 charging Microsoft with violating a licensing agreement for its Java language by changing it in software and developer tools that failed to meet Sun’s compatibility tests.

Sun’s Java language was developed to allow programs to run across a variety of operating systems under its ‘‘write once, run anywhere" slogan.

Sun says Microsoft’s ‘‘polluted" versions of Java were aimed at undermining the language, an increasingly popular tool for writing Web-based applications that can run on different platforms and could therefore challenge the dominance of Microsoft’s Windows operating system.

In August, an appeals court overturned Whyte’s earlier injunction, saying the case appeared to be a simple contract dispute rather than an instance of possible copyright infringement, as Sun has contested.

Both companies claimed victory in Tuesday’s ruling, with Microsoft saying it undermined Sun’s claims of copyright infringement and would not force further changes.

‘‘This reflects the status quo and Microsoft is already in compliance with the order," Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan said in a statement.

‘‘This strikes fundamentally at the heart of Sun’s position in this case and supports Microsoft’s oft-stated position that this is a contract dispute between two large and sophisticated companies," Cullinan said.

The order did not require Microsoft to recall any product or prevent the use of products already sold, he said.

‘‘Today’s ruling changes nothing for Microsoft and our customers in terms of using our technology and great products. We will continue to comply with the terms of the preliminary injunction while we review our legal options," he said.

Sun, long an outspoken critic of the Redmond, Wash.-based software giant in its antitrust case with the U.S. Justice Department, said the ruling supported its claims that Microsoft engaged in unfair business practices.

‘‘We are gratified that Judge Whyte reinstated the preliminary injunctive relief needed to redress this injury to competition, and that he did so after finding that Microsoft’s business practices had been unfair," Sun attorney Michael Morris said in a statement.

‘‘As we have said from the start of this case, Microsoft’s misconduct with respect to Sun’s Java technology has harmed competition, as well as those who use and rely on the Java technology," Morris said.

DOJ, States File Rebuttal To Microsoft Arguments

Neither snow nor rain stops the postal service, and the same could be said for the team of lawyers prosecuting Microsoft.

The U.S. Justice Department and 19 states braved a blizzard to file another brief in the Microsoft antitrust trial, which is rapidly moving toward oral arguments.

The government Wednesday had been scheduled to file the 30-page rebuttal to Microsoft’s proposed "conclusions of law," but officials for the Justice Department and states earlier had said the filing would likely be delayed. Heavy snows closed federal offices in Washington, D.C., including the federal court that is hearing the Microsoft case.

Nonetheless, the government filed a response and it was appropriate for the weather--blustery--said legal experts.

"There is nothing surprising here, and as expected the government attacked core arguments" put forth by Microsoft, said University of Baltimore School of Law professor Bob Lande.

As predicted, the government highlighted the findings of fact issued on Nov. 5 by U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson and disparaged Microsoft’s arguments. In his findings, Jackson concluded Microsoft is a dangerous monopoly that used aggressive and illegal means to preserve its Windows franchise.

"Microsoft treats as nearly an afterthought both the Court’s core finding that Microsoft has monopoly power and the unifying theme of the Court’s numerous findings on Microsoft’s conduct," the rebuttal states.

"Microsoft fought a multifront campaign, using a broad array of anti-competitive tactics that reduced rather than enhanced consumer choice, to sustain the critical barrier to entry protecting its monopoly power," the rebuttal continued.

The government referred again and again to Jackson’s findings, which "establish a violation of Section 2 (of the Sherman Act) under black-letter

principles of monopolization law."

The government faulted Microsoft's allegation that the definition of its monopoly market, PC operating systems, is too narrow and that competitors lurk at every turn.

This approach was not unexpected, said Glenn Manishin, an antitrust attorney with Patton Boggs in McLean, Va. The government focused "on some of what I call the silliness of Microsoft's argument, particularly their definition of the market to include every device known to man, plus even those that haven't been invented yet."

The government spent about half its brief dealing with the issue of monopoly power, which is the strongest portion of its case, said Dana Hayter, an antitrust and intellectual property attorney with Fenwick & West in San Francisco.

The government also addressed the issue of tying the browser to the operating system, one of the stronger areas of Microsoft's proposed conclusions of law, said legal experts.

In a compelling turnabout, the government used an appeals court ruling in an earlier case to support the idea that Internet Explorer and Windows 95/98 are separate products merely "bolted" together for commercial power. Microsoft earlier used that same ruling to show the two products are actually one.

Microsoft reacted strongly to the government's approach. "Now, at the eleventh hour, the government has concocted and created something called the 'bolting' principal of the decision," said Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan. "Windows 98 is much less bolted than Windows 95. And the appeals court already ruled in favor of Microsoft for Windows 95."

Another argument, that Microsoft's anti-competitive behavior increases its rivals costs, also drew Microsoft's ire.

"One example of the government trying to create new law is where the government says it is anti-competitive for one company to take actions that raise one rival's costs," Cullinan said. "This is nothing more than a radical, fringe theory, not the law."

The government also addressed exclusive contracts used by Microsoft to prevent computer makers and Internet service providers from distributing Netscape Communicator.

The brief also dealt extensively with the allegation Microsoft extended its monopoly to the browser market, another area legal experts claim is a weak area for the government.

"Contrary to Microsoft's contention, the findings also establish a dangerous probability that Microsoft would achieve power over price (or innovation, which can effectively decrease price by increasing the value of a product even while its dollar price remains at zero)," the brief states.

The government also attacked Microsoft-s contention that U.S. copyright law protects its right to impose boot-up screen restrictions on PC makers.

Microsoft will file a response to the brief on Feb. 1 while oral arguments are scheduled to begin on Feb. 22.

U.S. Funds to Attack Y2K Bug Are Well Spent

Top U.S. government and private-sector technology experts on Thursday defended the huge sums spent to ‘‘squash" the Year 2000 computer bug and warned Congress that glitches may crop up yet.

‘‘Did we spend too much?" asked Fernando Burbano, the State Department’s chief information officer and head of an interagency panel on protecting critical U.S. systems.

‘‘Absolutely not," he told a joint hearing of two House panels that monitored the $8.4 billion spent by the federal government to make sure systems would correctly interpret ‘‘00" as 2000, not 1900, and whir on.

‘‘We should be careful not to confuse the lack of catastrophic disruptions with unnecessary preparations by the federal government," he said.

The Commerce Department estimated in November that combined U.S. private-sector and government Y2K upgrades would cost about $100 billion by next year, or about $365 for every man, woman and child in the United States.

President Clinton’s top Y2K adviser, John Koskinen, declared on Jan. 3 that ‘‘what has been referred to as the Y2K bug has been squashed with regard to the key infrastructure systems in the United States."

‘‘To date, there have been no reports of serious Y2K-related problems that have affected trade between the United States and its major economic partners," he told the House Government Reform Committee and Science Committee sub-panels on Thursday.

Koskinen said the Y2K rollover had gone more smoothly "than any of us would have imagined" but dismissed second-guessers’ claims that the threat had been greatly exaggerated all along.

Tackling a recurring question, he cited unspecified countries that appeared to have spent little on the problem and were considered relatively unprepared but that had emerged apparently unscathed from the change.

Koskinen said many such nations may have spent the bulk of their funds in a concentrated effort in the last six to nine months of 1999 and, unlike the United States, were not ‘‘saddled with old legacy systems built with antiquated, customized code by people who had long retired."

‘‘The bottom lines is that the fixes were frequently more straightforward in those countries than in the U.S.," Koskinen added. Overall, the bug was beaten by a ‘‘tremendous mobilization of people and resources," he said.

Charles Rossotti, commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, said in draft testimony that the U.S. tax collection agency had experienced a smoother Dec. 9 to Jan. 3 rollover with fewer glitches ‘‘than in a normal year."

But Rossotti, like other witnesses, warned against declaring total victory on Y2K, which could still boggle computers coping with the Feb.

29 Leap Day, end-of-quarter and end-of-year reporting periods.

‘‘We are not out of the woods yet," said Harris Miller, president of the Information Technology Association of America, which loosely links 26,000 corporations in the United States.

‘‘If left uncorrected or corrected improperly, the Y2K bug would have proven troublesome at best and disastrous at worst," Miller said. He said Y2K-related upgrades would pay great dividends in ‘‘productivity, competency and understanding of technology."

Among glitches cited to illustrate Y2K pitfalls were a Defense Department spy satellite system hobbled by a glitch on the ground; failures of medical devices made by a Swedish company, double-charging snafus in credit card processing; a weather system shutdown in Chicago.

‘‘While the popular perception surrounding Y2K conjured fears of a major and immediate meltdown, many knowledgeable observers have warned of the cumulative effect instead," Harris said. ‘‘As with everything else Y2K, only time will tell."

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